forecasts are made on the basis of the assumptions made. It is a different matter. It is not a question of confidence. The Minister has to assure us that all the technicalities have been complied with, and only on that basis, he is making a statement here.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, I must thank the hon. Member for his compliments. But what I can assure is that when I say that the infrastructural areas won't be the victims, we won't effect reduction there; for that purpose, the hon. Prime Minister has constituted different Special Action Groups. They have deliberated among themselves and formed the strategy. On the basis of that strategy, we have only revised the Draft Plan which was formulated by the then Deputy Chairman, and now, it is under consideration. So, the Special Action Groups have studied it and a Task Force has been appointed. They have studied it, deliberated upon it and out of that deliberation, we gained confidence, Yes, we all stop whatever has been under the deteriorating condition.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI: Sir, I very much appreciate the answer of the hon. Minister that according to the schedule, the planning process will be completed on the due dates. It has already been informed to this House. I would like to know as to when the Planning Commissison is going to be fully constituted. We have got the Chairman; the Prime Minister is the Chairman; we got the Deputy Chairman, we have got only one member in the Planning Commission, as of today, who is a government servant. It is not fully constituted. The Planning Commission without being fully constituted, how can you finalise the plan? I would like to know when the Planning Commission will be fully constituted.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, as it is, the Planning Commission is fully constituted. If some members are required to be added, the hon. Prime Minister, as Prime Minister as well as Chairman of the Planning Commission, would take the decisison at appropriate time. But for want of additional members, the work has not been stopped. The work is going on. Professor Madhu Dandavate has done a lot of good work. He has done all the preliminary work. On the basis of that preliminary work, the Task Force has redefined certain projects, certain areas, and on the basis of that, it is being done. So, the Planning Commission is fully working. It is a question of number. Number does not make such difference, particularly because Professor Madhu Dandavate has done a lot of good work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 264.

Penalty for low standard telecom services

*264. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has proposed to penalise operators including Department of Telecom (DOT), if the quality of their service falls below the benchmark set by it;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(c) the action Government propose to take to implement the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, The TRAI has proposed penalties on some Service Parameters e.g. Service Access Delay, Provision of Service, Efficiency Rate of Customer Services, Maintainability and Billing Performance etc.

(c) The proposals are only at consultation stage. TRAI will be finalising these proposals after connsultations with the various Service Providers, Consumers and other interested parties. Action on these proposals would be taken by the Government once these are finalised by TRAI.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, the Government has admitted that the efficiency rate of maintenance has gone down. They have also mentioned that the maintainability and the billing performance also is not good. Now, Sir, as you are also aware, there is a racket operating in this Department. They are manipulating and inflating the bills also. Unfortunately, no action has been taken against them so far. The Government is not in a position to say by what time, the Government is going to formulate their plan. Can the hon. Minister tell the House by which time the proposal will

be finalised and whether the deficiencies in the system will be taken care of?

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, this question relates to the standards that are being evaluated, that are being prescribed, by the Telephone Regulatory Authority. They have categorised various services that are being rendered. They are fixing a standard for each service after getting some consultation work done by the experts. This is a very elaborate exercise. Take, for example, the Service Access Delay. This is one of the items which they have listed. They have put a benchmark for every item that this is the short-term target and this is the long-term target. The standards for quality of service will be laid down. Anything which is falling below that standard will be penalised. An elaborate exercise is required for checking whether those standards are being followed. Some equipments are also required. Some procedures have to be laid down. These are the functions which have been given to the Telephone Regulatory Authority and that Authority will be working on them. They are assessing the reaction of the public, the reaction of the service providers. I had an informal discussion with the Chairman of the Telephone Regulatory Authority yesterday. He had assured me that it will be done as quickly as possible.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, here also the Government feels that there is a necessity. The Minister has stated that he is in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority. After seeing the conditions as also the quality of services that are being provided, is it not the duty of the Government to fix it, say, three months or four months or six months? It cannot be an indefinite period. I would like to know whether the Government is coming forward with a definite date.

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, the Government is always trying to improve the quality of services and the exercise is going on regularly. The Department has already taken a number of steps, a number of measures. For example, telephone adalats are being held. In his own district eight adalats were fixed and all the eight pending grievances were redressed. So, there is a procedure. It is not that we are waiting for the proposals of the Telephone Regulatory Authority. The Telephone Regulatory Authority will lay down a more scientific procedure or a more detailed procedure. What I am suggesting is that it is not that the Government has stopped functioning. The Government is working daily to improve the efficiency and to redress the grievances of the public regularly. For instance, in the hon. Member's own district there were eight pending complaints and a telephone adalat was fixed and all the eight grievances were redressed.

There is a regular service cell, a regular grievance cell, a customer servic cell. All these things are going on. So far as the Telephone Regulatory Authority is concerned, it is endeavouring to lay down a more detailed procedure, a more scientific method, of assessing the complaints. For example, if my telephone is delayed, somebody has to say what is the delay that is permissible. If the delay is more than the permissible limit, what penalty should be prescribed. We have to evolve a more fair, a more quick, a more quasi-judicial procedure. That is the function of the Telephone Regulatory Authority. But the Department is continuously endeavouring to improve the services.

श्री सभापति: सतीश प्रधान जी, आप पूछिए।

श्री सतीश प्रधान: सभापति जी, मैं यही जानना चाहता था, लेकिन जवाब मंत्री जी ने दे दिया है।

श्री सभापति: ठीक है, तो फिर रहने दीजिए। रामदेव भंडारी जी, आप पूछिए।

श्री रामदेव भंडारी: सभापति महोदय, मंत्री जी ने यह कहा है कि वह टेलीफोन सेवा में सुधार के लिए लगातार प्रयास कर रहे हैं, उनका डिपार्टमेंट भी प्रयास कर रहा है। यह सवाल बार-बार सदन में आता है और बार-बार यह आश्वासन मिलता है कि इसमें सुधार होगा। मगर एक कहावत है कि "वही ढाक के तीन पात", यही बात होती है और बात वहीं की वहीं रह जाती है।

अब मैं अपना एक उदाहरण दे रहा हूं। मैं बिल्कुल स्वदेशी आदमी हूं विदेशों से मेरा कोई लेना-देना नहीं है। मगर मेरे टेलीफेन से विदेश कॉल्स करने का एक लाख रुपए से ज्यादा का बिल आया है, जबकि मैंने कहा कि मैं स्वदेशी आदमी हूं मुझे विदेश से कोई लेना-देना नहीं है। मैंने कई बार लिखा, मंत्री जी को भी लिखा, सम्बन्धित विभाग के लोग हैं उनको लिखा। परन्तु वही घिसा-पिटा

जवाब आता है कि आपने नहीं किया होगा तो आपके यहां से किसी दूसरे आदमी ने किया होगा। टेलीफोन को मैं एक कमरे में बंद करके रखता हूं तो मेरे यहां से दूसरा आदमी कौन कर लेगा। मेरे घर के टेलीफोन की भी वही हालत है। 15-15 हजार के बिल आ जाते हैं। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि जब एक सांसद की यह हालत है श्रीमान्, तो आम आदमी की क्या हालत होगी? इस सदन का शायद ही कोई व्यक्ति ऐसा है जो इस डिपार्टमैंट का मारा हुआ न हो। सभी पर इस डिपार्टमैंट की मार पड़ती है। अब मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि जो शिकायत आती है उसकी शीघ्र एवं सही, मेरे शब्द पर मंत्री जी ध्यान देंगे-शीघ्र एवं सही जांच करने के लिए क्या त्वरित कार्रवाई आप करेंगे, इस संबंध में कृपया आप जानकारी देंगे? धन्यवाद।

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, so far as the individual case is concerned, the hon. Member may kindly send the details to me. He has already said that he has sent the file to my predecessor, and a reply has been received from him. Maybe, it is unsatisfactory from his point of view. This billing is computerised. Therefore, the Department has some viewpoint, but I am prepared to look into this again. If he gives me the bill, I will call the seniormost officer and assess to what extent it is. I would request the Member to give whatever details he has. We will definitely give the most earnest consideration to his case. He may be right, but we will have to look into this specific case.

श्रीमती कमला सिन्हा: इस सदन के दो तिहाई सदस्यों की यह हालत है। मेरे नाम पर भी एक लाख सत्तावन हजार रुपए का बिल पड़ा हुआ है। मैंने बारम्बार लिखा कि इसको जांच करके देख लिया जाए। जब भी जवाब आता है कोई कार्रवाई नहीं होती है और ऐसी-ऐसी जगहों के टेलीफोन नम्बर्स हैं जिससे मेरा कोई लेना-देना नहीं है।

SHRI JAYANT KUMAR MALHOUTRA: Sir, this is a common complaint. Bills pertaining to some countries with which we have nothing to do are listed against my numbers. ...*(interruptions)*... This is a common complaint. Bills pertaining to Korea, etc., with which we have nothing to do, have been listed against my numbers. ...*(interruptions)*...

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, her question relates to individual cases. Individual cases have to be referred to the Department. I have to go into the merits of individual cases. I can't give a reply here. The issue is the standard of services to be provided by the Telephone Regulatory Authority...*(interruptions)*...

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: You send the bills in a computerised form to M.Ps.

SHRI JAYANT KUMAR MALHOUTRA: Sir, there is no solution being found.

श्री नरेश यादव: माननीय मंत्री जी के विभाग की यह जनरल शिकायत है, यह इंडिविज्युअल नहीं हैं। ....(व्यवधान)

श्री सतीश प्रधान: यह इस तरह से बहुत बिल आते हैं। यह दो-दो, तीन-तीन लाख रुपए के बिल आते हैं। फिर अखबारों में छापा जाता है कि सांसद लोग बिल नहीं भरते हैं। ...(व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: वह ठीक है, अब इनकी बारी है। कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे।

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: By that time the Question Hour will be over.

श्री सतीश प्रधान: सर, सांसद लोग बिल नहीं भरते हैं ऐसा अखबार में छापा जाता है।...(व्यवधान) इसमें तुरन्त निर्णय लेने की जरूरत है। यह इंडिविज्युअल केसेज बतला रहा है। लोगों की भी यही शिकायत है।...(व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: अच्छा, उनको बोल लेने दीजिए।

कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे: सर, मैं मंत्री जी का दिया गया जवाब बहुत ध्यानपूर्वक सुन रही थी। मुझे बड़ा दुख हुआ कि आपने यह कहा कि इंडिविज्युअल केसेज के बारे में मैं कोई जानकारी नहीं दे सकता हूं, हासिल करने के बाद दूंगा। मेरा स्पेसिफिक क्वेश्चन आपसे है कि अभी तक आपके डिपार्टमैंट को आपके मंत्रालय से कितनी इस प्रकार की कम्पलेंड रिसीव करी हुई हैं और उस पर आपने क्या एक्शन लिया है और यह तो इनफिलेटेड बिल आ रहे हैं, हम सिर्फ एम॰पीज॰ की बात नहीं कर रहे हैं, आप हिन्दुस्तान में किसी भी कोने में चले जाइए लोगों की यही शिकायत है। इसके बारे में आपने क्या निर्णय लिया है, मुझे जानकारी चाहिए?

SHRI JAGMOHAN: Sir, it is very clear that if there is an individual case, it has to be looked into.

कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे: हम इंडिविज्युअल की बात बिल्कुल नहीं कर रहे हैं।

SHRI JAGMOHAN: I will explain. Sir, that has to be looked into specifically. ...*(interruptions)*...

कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे: हम इंडिविज्युअल की बात बिल्कुल नहीं कर रहे हैं। मेहरबानी करके मंत्री जी यह न समझें कि हम सदस्य हैं — हम राज्य सभा व लोक सभा के सदस्य हैं इसलिए इस सवाल को उठाते हैं। हम देश भर से जनता से, आम नागरिकों से आई हुई शिकायतों के बारे में आपसे जानना चाहते हैं?...(व्यवधान)

श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया: आप कम्प्यूटराइज्ड बिल भेज दीजिए न, प्रोब्लम सोल्व हो जाएगी। ...(व्यवधान)

डा० (श्रीमती) उर्मिलाबेन चिमनभाई पटेल: ...(व्यवधान)आप इसकी जांच कराइए?...(व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Post Offices in Tamil Nadu

*265. SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices in Tamil Nadu, district-wise;

(b) what are the norms for setting up of new post offices; and

(c) whether Government will set up new post offices in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, waiving the criteria, in view of the backwardness of the district?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) The number of Post Offices in Tamil Nadu, district-wise, are given in the Statement-I (*See* below)

(b) Norms for setting up new Post Offices are given in the Statement-II (*See* below).

(c) Post Offices are opened subject to norm based justification and availability of resources. The norms for opening EDBOs in Rural Areas offer a subsidy of $66^{2}/_{33}$% of the cost which is further enhanced for hilly, tribal desert and inaccessible areas to 85% of the cost. Besides, there are relaxed norms for population and distance for the latter category of areas where the minimum population required is 500 in an individual village or 1000 in a group of villages which is much less than the norms for normal rural areas. The distance norm can be relaxed by the Directorate in case of hilly areas. So far as the postal network is concerned, Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, where the average area served per post office is 13.69 sq. kms. and average population served per post office is 3702, fares well when compared to the National averages of population and area served per post office which are 5502 and 21.42 sq. kms respectively. In the rural areas of Tamil nadu, the average area served per post offfice is 12.23 sq. kms. and average population served per post office is 3622.

There is a target for opening one Extra Departmental Branch post office in Ramanathapuram during 1998-99, subject to availability of resources.

The district of Ramanathapuram is not declared as Backward by the State Government.

Statement-I

District-wise details of number of post offices in Tamil Nadu State as on date

Sl. No.	Name of District	No. of Post Offices
1.	Chennai	175
2.	Cuddaiore	508
3.	Coimbatore	622
4.	Dindigul	488
5.	Darmapuri	583
6.	Erode	513
7.	Kanchipuram	589
8.	Kanyakumari	285
9.	Karur	241
10.	Madurai	409
11.	Nagapattinam	599
12.	Namakkal	352
13.	Nilgiris	182
14.	Pudukottal	342
15.	Perambalur	137
16.	Ramanathapuram	333
17.	Salem	532
18.	Sivagengai	298